

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

ICA-11 IO-13 CAB-02 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-08 FAA-00

/101 W

-----030536 061101Z /13

R 052344Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1406

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 09976

E.O."01652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, PEPR, KS, UR

SUBJECT: ROK-SOVIET RELATIONS

REF: SEOUL 3640

1. SOVIET OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD US PRIVATELY ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS THAT THE ROK SHOULD ENTERTAIN NO "ILLUSIONS" ABOUT POSSIBILITY THAT THE SOVIET UNION WOULD DO ANYTHING THAT WOULD SMACK OF "DE JURE" RECOGNITION OF SEOUL. THIS WAS MOST RECENTLY REITERATED BY MFA DEPUTY CHIEF (KOREA) FIRST FAR EAST DEPARTMENT FADEYEV IN MARCH 14 CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF REPORTED MOSCOW 4883. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT SOVIET HANDLING OF KAL INCIDENT INDICATES POSSIBILITY OF A CHANGE IN THIS SOVIET POSITION. SEVERAL OTHER FACTORS MAY ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO A SOVIET RELUCTANCE TO DO ANYTHING WHICH WOULD IMPLY "RECOGNITION" OF THE ROK AT THIS JUNCTURE.

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--RECENT INDICATIONS, INCLUDING PLANNED TRIP BY KIM IL-SONG TO MOSCOW, THAT SOVIET-DPRK RELATIONS MAY BE "LEVELING OUT" AND MAYBE EVEN TAKING A SLIGHT UPTURN. THE USSR IS PROBABLY SATISFIED WITH THIS TREND AND WOULD NOT WANT TO JEOPARDIZE IT BY RESPONDING TO GESTURES FROM SEOUL.

--ONGOING SOVIET PROPAGANDA SUPPORT FOR THE DPRK. THIS INCLUDES SOVIET PRESS' ECHOING OF DPRK CRITICISM OF ROK, US AND JAPAN (MOSCOW 1905, 2129), OF THE US-ROK "TEAM SPIRIT" EXERCISES, AND THE RECENT US ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT SLOWDOWN IN US TROOP WITHDRAWALS FROM THE ROK.

--SIGNS THAT PYONGYANG COULD BE GETTING APPREHENSIVE ABOUT CHINESE WILLINGNESS TO BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE US AND PEKING'S ACTIVE CONDEMNATION OF SOVIET UNION AS "THREAT NO. ONE".

2. WE WOULD THEREFORE CONCLUDE THAT ROK OFFICIALS ARE UNDULY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT POSSIBILITY THAT KAL INCIDENT COULD BE USED TO ESTABLISH A DIPLOMATIC DIALOGUE WITH THE USSR, INCLUDING THROUGH ICAO CHANNEL (DISCUSSED SEPTEL). UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, WE JUDGE SPECULATION THAT MOSCOW MAY BE RECEPTIVE TO ANY ROK GESTURES THAT WOULD IMPLY "RECOGNITION" OF SEOUL AS UNWARRANTED. TOON

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